



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 26 No. 1 Feb. - Mar. 2017

Service Probably Saved My Life

I voluntarily went to my first AA meeting on August 12th of 1998 at the suggestion of my attorney. This was 4 days after being arrested again for drunk driving. I couldn't identify myself as an alcoholic at that first meeting. I said, "My name is Tony and I might have a problem with alcohol." This is probably the stupidest thing I have ever said at a meeting. I can't recall exactly, but someone probably said "keep coming."

I went to a couple of meetings hoping to avoid jail time before my court case. Due to a computer mistake I got off with a lighter sentence than I deserved. I had dodged another bullet. I hadn't planned to go to anymore meetings until it became a condition of my probation and a mandatory alcohol program. If I wanted to get my license back in two years, I was going to have to attend two meetings a week for five months. I came back to meetings just to get my card signed twice a week. I could have just forged someone's initials on the card, but instead, I went to the two meetings per week as directed.

I stayed dry for about two months after my arrest until I decided that I needed a vacation. So I went to Florida with my drinking buddies and intended to stay sober for the week. I didn't bring any phone numbers with me, and I didn't search for any AA meetings. I stayed sober for two days and then I picked up a drink; I drank for the next five days. I was a blackout drinker from my first drink at age 13, but for some reason I didn't blackout during those five days. I am not sure if the limited exposure to AA was ruining my drinking, but I came back home and went back to meetings and didn't tell anybody that I had been drinking.

For the next month-and-a-half I drank three more times, again not blacking out. The last drink I took was the day after Thanksgiving in 1998. Again I went back to meetings just to get my card signed. The chairperson of the Wednesday night meeting in North Haven told me once, after signing my card, that someday I would be chairing that meeting. My response was "never" and I try not to say "never" anymore.

Just around the time that I stopped needing to have my card signed, the chairperson position opened at that Wednesday night meeting. Someone who would eventually become a good friend of mine, nominated me to chair the meeting. I paused for about five seconds and then said the most important thing I have ever said in a meeting, "Yes." I proceeded to chair that meeting for the next 13 weeks. It was a reason to go to a meeting without the requirement of getting my card signed. I got

to know and remember people's names. This started a very joyful life in service.

While serving as the chairperson of that meeting, I was nominated to be the treasurer of the Monday Night meeting in North Haven. Again I said "Yes." These two commitments kept me coming to AA until I wanted to come. They probably saved my life. If I hadn't kept coming to AA, eventually I would have drunk. I have been to a lot of speaker meetings where the speaker talks about what happens when they stopped going to meetings. In most cases the person eventually picked up a drink. Eventually I got a sponsor and started working the steps into my life.

I got my driver's license back in September 2000 and immediately started attending more meetings. I volunteered for a General Service Representative (GSR) commitment. Since then, I have had several positions at the district level. One of the things I've loved about going to district meetings has been learning about about the Traditions and Concepts. I also got involved with some other committees at the district and area level. I have had at least one commitment at all times for the past 18 years, most times two or three commitments. If it works, why change it? I still get fearful sometimes when taking on some of these larger commitments, but they are never as difficult as my mind makes them out to be. I am not alone anymore and all I have to do is ask for help. I came to AA for all the wrong reasons, but I stay for the right ones. I need to give back what was freely given to me. Service probably saved my life. Do not be afraid to say "Yes" when the opportunity comes.

—Tony F., North Haven

El servicio probablemente salvó mi vida

Yo fui voluntariamente a mi primera reunión de AA el 12 de agosto de 1998 tras la sugerencia de mi abogado. Esto fue 4 días después de haber sido arrestado nuevamente por conducir borracho. No me pude identificar como un alcohólico en esa primera reunión. Yo dije, "Mi nombre es Tony y tal vez tengo un problema con el alcohol." Esto es probablemente lo más estúpido que jamás he dicho en una reunión. No pude recordar bien, pero alguien probablemente dijo, "sigue viniendo."

Llegué a unas cuantas reuniones esperando evitar pasar tiempo en la cárcel antes de mi juicio en la corte. Debido a un error en la computadora me dejaron ir con una sentencia más suave de la que merecía. Había esquivado otra bala.

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Yo no planeaba ir a más reuniones, hasta que se me requirió asistir a dos reuniones a la semana como condición de mi probatoria y programa de alcohol mandatorio que tenía que completar para poder recibir de nuevo mi licencia en dos años. Yo regresé a las reuniones para que me firmaran mi tarjeta dos veces a la semana. Pude haber falsificado las iniciales de alguien en la tarjeta, pero yo fui a las dos reuniones a la semana durante los siguientes cinco meses.

Me mantuve seco por casi dos meses después de mi arresto y decidí que necesitaba unas vacaciones. Así que me fui a Florida por una semana con mis amigos con los que bebía y tenía la intención de mantenerme sobrio durante la semana. No me llevé ningún número telefónico ni busqué reuniones de AA. Me mantuve sobrio por dos días y luego volví a beber y bebí durante los siguientes cinco días. Yo bebía hasta sufrir lagunas mentales desde que tomé mi primer trago a la edad de 13 años. Pero por alguna razón no sufrí una laguna mental durante aquellos cinco días. No estoy seguro si el tiempo limitado de haber sido expuesto a AA estaba arruinando mi bebida, pero regresé a casa y volví a las reuniones y no le dije a nadie que había estado bebiendo.

Durante el siguiente mes y medio yo bebí tres veces más, nuevamente sin sufrir lagunas mentales. El último trago que tomé fue el día después del día de Acción de Gracias en 1998. Otra vez regresé a las reuniones para que me siguieran firmando mi tarjeta. El coordinador de la reunión del miércoles en la noche en North Haven me dijo una vez, después de firmar mi tarjeta, que algún día yo estaría coordinando esa reunión. Mi respuesta fue, "nunca", y ahora trato de no decir más la palabra "nunca."

Justo alrededor del tiempo en que yo iba a dejar de necesitar que me firmaran mi tarjeta, quedó abierta la posición de coordinador en esa reunión de miércoles en la noche. Alguien que eventualmente se volvería en un buen amigo mío me nominó para que coordinara la reunión. Yo hice pausa por casi cinco segundos y luego dije la cosa más importante que jamás había dicho en una reunión, "Sí." Procedí a coordinar aquella reunión durante las siguientes 13 semanas. Era una razón para ir sin tener el requerimiento de obtener una firma en mi tarjeta. Pude aprender y recordarme de los nombres de las personas. Esto fue el inicio de una vida muy alegre en el servicio.

Mientras estaba sirviendo como coordinador de aquella reunión, fui nominado a ser el tesorero de la reunión del lunes en la noche en North Haven. Nuevamente yo dije, "Sí." Estos dos compromisos me mantenían regresando a AA hasta que yo quisiera regresar. Ellos probablemente salvaron mi vida. Si no hubiera seguido viniendo a AA, eventualmente hubiera bebido. He ido a varias reuniones de oradores en donde el orador habla acerca de lo que sucede cuando dejaron de ir a reuniones. En la mayoría de los casos la persona eventualmente volvía a beber. Eventualmente yo encontré a un padrino y empecé a trabajar los pasos en mi vida.

Obtuve nuevamente mi licencia de conducir en septiembre del 2000 e inmediatamente empecé a asistir a más reuniones. Me hice voluntario para un compromiso de RSG. He tenido varias posiciones a nivel de distrito. Me encanta ir a reuniones de los RSG: me han enseñado bastante acerca de las Tradiciones y Conceptos, que no se discuten en muchas

reuniones de las cuales yo asisto. También me involucré en algunos otros comités a nivel de distrito y de área. He tenido al menos un compromiso en todo momento durante los últimos 18 años, casi siempre dos o tres compromisos. Si funciona, ¿para qué cambiarlo? A veces todavía siento temores cuando acepto algunos de estos compromisos más grandes, pero nunca son tan difíciles como mi mente me hace creer que son. Ya no estoy solo y lo único que tengo que hacer es pedir ayuda. Yo llegué a AA por todas las razones equivocadas, pero me quedo por las razones correctas. Necesito dar de regreso lo que libremente se me dio. El servicio probablemente salvó mi vida. No tengas miedo de decir, "Sí" cuando se presente la oportunidad.

—Tony F., North Haven

Prayer for Alcoholics

God, bless alcoholics wherever
they may be and guide those
who are still active to this
fellowship.

Grant grace to those who are
sober today,

Give strength to those who are on
their way,

And have mercy upon those
who will never get here.

—C.M.

Life Has Taken on New Meaning

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. . . . Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

—Daily Reflection for December 8, page 351

About a year ago, I woke up feeling, as I did most days, like an empty shell and contemplated suicide. I knew exactly how I would end my life, which had become a cycle of binge drinking, regret, blackouts, and more regret. I had become isolated from friends and family, and had become an unrecognizable person living a life without meaning. Now I find myself, not even three months sober, rekindling and rebuilding. My life has changed 180 degrees and has taken on new meaning.

I sat there feeling sorry for myself, thinking about killing myself. On that day, I had my daughter sitting there with me and she was the only thing that kept me from carrying out my suicide plan. I had neglected my responsibilities and had done so for quite some time. I had gone from having more money than I knew what to do with, to being in debt from making poor financial decisions. At the time,

my job was all-consuming; I worked and drank six days a week and on the seventh day, I rested to recover from my drinking. I treated the employees under me, the customers around me, and the friends trying to help me poorly and cared more about drinking than myself. I had fallen into habits of drinking, poor decision making, followed by further drinking. No wonder I was depressed and had these intense anxiety attacks that made half my body go numb. Some days, I woke up wondering how I was still alive.

From that day, the problems, of course, only got worse. My career, which just a few years earlier had provided me with great success, had gone down the tubes. So what did I do? I followed my mother's advice and walked out. I walked out on my career, my apartment, and my investments and moved back to my mother's house! I drank less frequently but the problems started up again, especially since I switched from beer to hard liquor in an effort to lose weight. Well, I lost weight but I also felt like I had lost my mind. I continued to get into trouble, anger many people, and further damage my reputation (what was left of it!).

My mom finally said, "If you ever drink again you are out of the house and out of the family!" I took this ultimatum seriously and I stopped drinking on September 26, 2016.

The first three days of sobriety were quite difficult. I could not leave my bed. I was shaking, my legs hurt, and I could not walk very well. I was extremely tired and yet somehow my body was full of energy. I would sleep for 30 minutes and then stay awake for 30 minutes, repeating this cycle several times. I kept having horrible nightmares and unusual, vivid visions. I was tempted to drink this misery away, but I thought, "no pain no gain."

I went to my first AA meeting on the fourth day and spoke to everyone in the room telling them about the nightmares and the pain. It felt comforting that others had similar struggles, that I was no longer alone. I could call anyone in that room, and actually talk to someone about my issues. As described in the Daily Reflection quote above, the fellowship aspect of the program is something I am working on and it is actually coming along naturally. As part of my sobriety, I am trying to connect with others, inside and outside the AA rooms. Now, I spend time with friends and have started reconnecting with family I hadn't seen in years.

Meetings have helped change my perception of things and my mind finally feels like it has some clarity. Now approaching three months of sobriety, I am looking forward to getting that coin. In this period of time, I finished school to get my real estate license and will be taking the state exam soon. I have been hired by a real estate firm as an analyst. I actually feel happy, not only about my sobriety but also about life. I have been able to make better connections with people, to live in a meaningful and caring manner. I have gone from feeling like an empty shell to someone that feels truly happy and positive. My life has taken on new meaning and I find myself on a journey of sobriety — a journey of self-reflection, mystery, and success.

—Matt P., Hamden

Area 11 Convention Committee Needs New Members!

What we do:

Plan the Area 11 State Convention to be held in
September 2017

When we meet:

Noon on the third Sunday of every month,
starting January 15, 2017

Where:

Area 11 Office, Top Floor
112 E. Main Street, Meriden

Come, have a voice, take a commitment, stay sober, and
HAVE FUN with the
Area 11 (Connecticut State) Convention Committee

For questions or additional information, email:
area11convention@ct-aa.org

Practicing the Eleventh Step (From Vol. 21, No. 2 April - May 2012)

Practicing our 11th step meditation is not just about finding quiet time. It is about starting to find a quiet mind.

The Problem:

1. We are way too busy.
2. We think we can't find quiet time.
3. It's not a quick fix. This does take time.
4. There is no end. We like an ending; we like to graduate.

The Solution:

1. Focus on one thing at a time.
 - a. When I'm at a meeting, I'm focused and after the meeting I feel better.
 - b. When I'm in the now and focused, I always feel better.

I like to start my meditation in a quiet place. Choose a special place either indoors or outdoors so that when you sit down, you know it's about meditation, quiet, being still, and knowing God.

Sit with your back straight and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes, rest, and just breathe in and out softly, knowing in your mind that with the in-breath you are quiet; and with the out-breath, you are still. There is no need to say anything, just think "quiet and still... quiet and still."

I know every time I experience a meditation that seems to work, I feel great. I had no idea that I would ever be able to sit still and enjoy it.

Be grateful — Be mindful — Be still.

—Anonymous

How to reach AA:
866-STEP12

Para ponerse en contacto con AA, llame:
855-ESPANCT

What are Area Assemblies?

Area 11 hosts three assemblies each year.

Usually in March, a **Pre-Conference Assembly** is held to which all members of the AA Fellowship are invited to participate. This Pre-Conference Assembly's primary purpose is to discuss the agenda items of the current General Service Conference, which is usually held in April in New York City, and inform the delegate of the Area's group conscience, thoughts, and experience on the Agenda items that will be before the Conference Delegates at that year's conference.

The Area holds a **Spring Assembly** in May, which is a report back to the Fellowship on the General Service Conference. Again, this Assembly is open to all AA members.

The Area holds a **Fall Assembly** in November. In even years, this is a "voting" assembly where the entire slate of Area Officers is elected. In those even years where a Northeast Regional Trustee position is becoming available, if any past Area Delegates make themselves available for this position, the Area can elect a candidate for the position of Northeast Regional Trustee, which is a position that is voted on at the General Service Conference following that Assembly. In "odd" years the format of the Fall Assembly is decided by the Area Chairperson.

Old Business (New Business items pending from the previous Assembly) would also be voted on at a Spring or Fall Assembly. No Business items are ever voted on at a Pre-Conference Assembly.

– from www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/area-assemblies/

Heard in the Rooms...

"The secret is in the surrender."

"Insanity is doing the same thing again and again, and expecting different results."

"God can't drive a parked car."

"Don't judge your inside on somebody else's outside."

"Don't believe everything you think."

"We can't change the way the wind blows, but we can change the way we set our sail."

"Alcoholics who work the steps stay sober."

*"Rome wasn't built in a day, but it burned down pretty f*cking fast."*

"If you hang out at the amusement park all day, eventually you'll take a ride."

"Get on your knees before you fall on your ass."

"Be prepared to lose whatever you put ahead of your sobriety."

Save The Date

Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly (NERAASA)

February 24 - 26, 2017
Sheraton Framingham Hotel & Conference Center
1657 Worcester Road, Framingham, Massachusetts

Pre-Conference Assembly

March 19, 2017 — 8:30am - 3:30pm
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain, CT

Spring Assembly

May 20, 2017
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain, CT

Fall Assembly

November 12, 2017
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain, CT

Visit www.ct-aa.org/news-and-events for more info.

Responsibility Pledge

I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere
reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA
always to be there.

And for that,
I am responsible!

We Want To Hear From You!

Submit Articles, Photos, Letters,
Suggestions and Constructive Criticism:

Email: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Mail: Alki-Line, 112 E. Main St, Meriden, CT 06450

Hand material to a GSR

This newsletter is by and for alcoholics; however, we review submissions by all interested in the AA program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length. This newsletter and earlier issues can be downloaded at www.ct-aa.org.

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**How to reach AA:
866-STEPS12**

**Para ponerse en contacto con AA, llame:
855-ESPANCT**